

TLS Commentary

The paradoxes of Piranesi

By John Bender

Piranesi sustains a major artistic reputation through his choice of medium, signals that prime requisite of greatness, which is to know instinctively what one needs. For him, as for Dürer, the sculptural act of making plates for printing transfigured a brilliant but otherwise constrained visual imagination. This is the conclusion I would draw from the Arts Council's show of Piranesi's work, which will remain at the Hayward Gallery until June 11 in commemoration of the bicentenary of the artist's death. It is far from being the formal thesis of the exhibition.

This astute gathering of 357 artefacts illustrates every facet of Piranesi's career as etcher, draughtsman, archaeologist, controversialist, and visionary architect, the progenitor of a grandiose, eclectic neo-classicism in design that would develop through many generations from the late eighteenth century onwards. Piranesi's drawings, particularly relevant to any judgment on the nature of his talent, are profusely represented at the Hayward, where a large number from the Pierpont Morgan Library's great collection join diverse others from all over the world. They are spread about and awkward of access, yet they establish at a stroke this exhibition's major stature. Even his one executed building, S Maria del Priore, is present in huge photographic blow-ups which recur throughout the exhibition, reminding us of his life-long desire to be considered an architect. This amazingly plastic structure, together with a marvellous array of Piranesi's actual copper plates from the *Calcoграфия Nazionale* in Rome, seems to me leading evidence that his imagination was, paradoxically, sculptural.

The prints themselves are of course the chief evidence. The early (first) series of his *Prisons* or *Carceri* are meditative essays concerned with a paradoxical interplay between gargantuan architectural masses and a light schizoid manner of etching, which show his incalculable—possibly even his conscious—awareness that his chosen subject-matter was not in perfect congruence with the medium of etching. This intuition produced masterpieces of a private, transient character, and Piranesi resolved the paradox in favour of the monumental plasticity that is the hallmark of his *Views of Rome*. But even in the stupendous "Foundations of Hadrian's Mausoleum" (the illustration on the poster advertising this exhibition), where actually the three plates becomes a mountain of rusticated masonry, vestiges of tension remain unconquered by Piranesi's technical virtuosity.

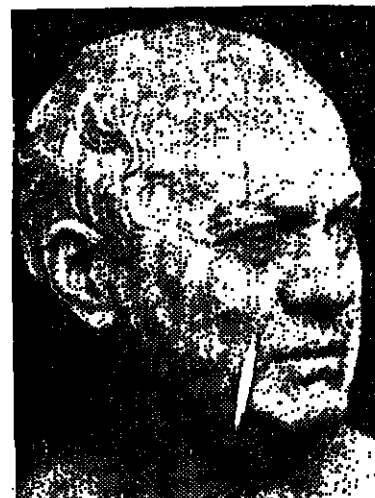
I believe the intrinsically paradoxical act of cutting into metal so as to create a graphic image in ink to be the font of vitality nurturing Piranesi's greatest works. The exhibition provides a wonderful opportunity to test this proposition since several of the vases and other ancient decorative sculptures that Piranesi both sold in English travel-ware and did up into prints are set forth to go. To analyse the etching, however, is to miss the vitality of the plastic forms that the sculpted marble originals from Rome itself. More centrally, the show's juxtaposition of his drawings with his prints indicates that the usual classification of Piranesi as a print-maker is correct. He was a great etcher but just a significant draughtsman in other media—no slight thing in a period of great drawing.

Now that I have seen the exhibition, most of the drawings, however, for me, the status of pleasurable elegant supporting documents. The project for S Maria del Priore, among the uniquely enlightening in this respect since they were intended to be schematic renderings: they have none of the sculptural vitality through which the building and its decoration make their impression. Piranesi's first biographer, Bianconi, a classicist, noticed this too but admired the drawings and deplored the building. Piranesi

appears to have unleashed a plastic force during the actual construction, just as he reserved creative energy to the last when designing a copper plate. Another early biographer, Legrand, reports Piranesi as having said, "can't you see that if my drawing were finished my plate would become nothing more than a copy while, on the contrary, I create the impression straight on to the copper making an original". That is my entire argument.

The exhibition is at once more and less comprehensive than the conclusions I have drawn from it. Since its explanatory labels advance a thesis, as well as placing the exhibition in approximate chronological order, the show moves with an expository directness summarized by John Wilton-Ely, the organizer of the exhibition and author of its excellent catalogue, in introducing this historically reasoned view of Piranesi:

The opening two sections explore the artist's formative experiences in the contrasting environments of his native Venice and adoptive city of Rome. . . . Then follows a survey of his career as a master of etching in transforming the engraved *veduta* into a series of powerfully charged images which conditioned the conception of Rome for countless generations. Archaeology—the central activity and motivating force in Piranesi's life from the early 1750s onwards—is represented in the next section with the innovative *Antichità Romane*. . . . In



Portrait bust of Piranesi by Joseph Nollekens (in the Accademia di S. Luca, Rome).

the 1760s Piranesi inevitably became caught up in the Graeco-Roman controversy and the resulting artistic tensions which are reflected in the anatomically re-fashioned plates of the *Corona d'Invenzione*. . . . led Piranesi to fashion a highly idiosyncratic system of design based on a broad eclecticism. Two inter-related sections feature the application of this consciously modern style to two architectural commissions and various works of applied and decorative art. . . . By the 1770s . . . these original principles of composition . . . extended to the restoration of antiquities. . . . the selection of objects in the exhibition. . . . The concluding section, devoted to the legacy of Piranesi's imagery for Romanticism, touches upon the fields of topography, stage design, the architectural fantasy and most significantly, the world of literature.

This adds up to the largest exhibition yet devoted to Piranesi. Although aesthetic judgments must govern any selection of individual art objects—indeed the very decision to honour Piranesi rather than some other artist or architect who died in 1778 is an aesthetic judgment—Mr Wilton-Ely is primarily concerned with historical sequences and interrelations. He insists upon Piranesi's achievement as being that of a man driven by an "overriding sense of vocation" as a mediator between the heritage of the past and the needs of his own era. Thus the exhibition while offering occasion to compre-

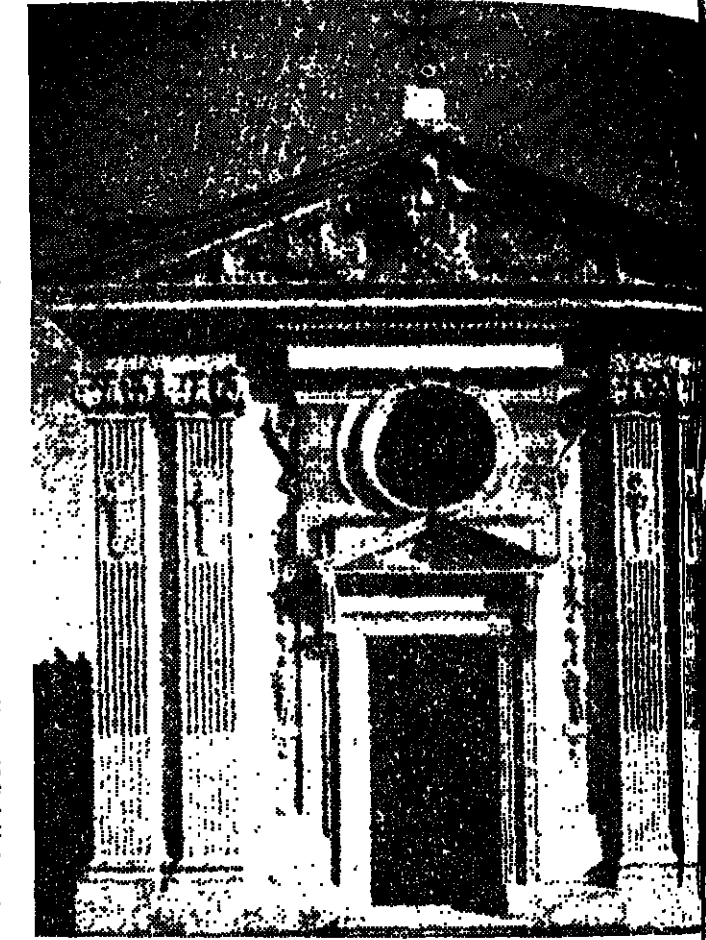
hend brilliant etchings, tends to demand rather too stridently that we understand Piranesi's greatness as deriving from his historical position, his sense of mission, and his influence on the art of his own and later generations. If his career is conceived in this way, Piranesi's choice of the copper plate as his chief artistic medium can be taken as signifying didactic intent rather than as one of those rare accommodations by imaginative genius of the mere physical materials of nature that so astonish us in great art.

Mr Wilton-Ely's selection of objects and his articulations of judgment generally are quite sensitive, so none of this is really to blame him: the imperatives of historical understanding require us to register scores of lesser items in order to comprehend the merit of relatively few. By insisting that we view Piranesi as a whole historical being, he provides an intellectual framework for aesthetic judgments of the kind with which I begin; that one feels impelled to make them is a measure of his success. In this respect, no book of plates nor any sequence of visits to museums can approach the impact of a great exhibition. Certainly I have understood the drawings less completely in the intimate setting of museum study rooms than at the Hayward, and of course reproductions in books inevitably flatten out the differences among works of art.

The sheer mass of visually detailed material in this exhibition continually urges us along towards choices which can, upon reflection, form into conclusions about the value of Piranesi's work. It is easy to patronize him: "The Rembrandt of ruins," said his biographer Bianconi. It is easy to imply that his Roman *vedute*—no less than the antiquities he sold to English nobles in the 1770s—were the work of a huckster catering to dilettantes. Etching, since it produces multiple originals, would be an obvious choice of medium for such an entrepreneur. It is perhaps no accident, given the persistence of these allegations, however, that Piranesi held the highest esteem since the Romantic period have remained these most manifestly private in character—though they were least valued in his own lifetime—the *Carceri* of c. 1743-45.

Piranesi's capacity to sustain an exhibition on the scale of this one 200 years after his death says much about his deep insights into the objects and facts displayed disprove them point by point. Probably he did learn something about total contrast by studying Rembrandt in a Roman collection, but his genius was to fuse a personal style out of the Graeco-Roman tradition of etching, which was reaching its apex when he was in his teens and twenties, and the good Roman tradition of the *veduta*, which was ripe for an infusion of real talent. It is true that he started with small pieces of work for Roman publishers of guide books and souvenir prints, but his invention of the large-scale *veduta* was the product of a passionate interest in archaeology and an ambition for modern architecture to be based on the ancient Rome. He used the form to disseminate archaeological detail far beyond the needs of the vast majority of his tourist customers. The visual texture of the etchings, as opposed to the drawings, is for him the key to their approach the sculptural force of real architecture, while at the same time possessing advantages for didactic purposes of easy and widespread publication. Had he worked in marble instead of copper plates, Piranesi might never have been recognized by the Society of Antiquaries of London, which in 1757 made him an Honorary Fellow for his archaeological achievements in the *Antichità Romane*.

In one of Piranesi's views of the Forum of Caesars a gesticulating figure of the ancient Rome, he is occupied with reading the legend that he fails to notice the pyramid looming mountainously over him. Visitors to large, historically conceived exhibitions, as well as those who select and replicate them, in danger of doing the same. To



The facade of S Maria del Priore, from John Wilton-Ely's book and Art of Giovanni Battista Piranesi.

alloy Piranesi's various works equal weight in the scales of aesthetic merit, just as they consume equivalent space on walls or in catalogue entries, is potentially as treacherous as a way of superseding the art itself, and information normalizes variations in quality: since the labels all have equal aesthetic merit, they tend to imply that the art they hover to assist does too.

A large show of Piranesi probably had to argue his historical importance in order to forestall allegations of pretentiousness; and Mr Wilton-Ely partly avoids the dangers that concern me by singling out a few plates and drawings as exceptional in their particular categories. Still, the exhibition does not present an aesthetic response to Piranesi which even approaches the cohesiveness of his historical argumentation. By contrast, the Rowland Jones show just closing at the Royal Academy, though otherwise less ambitious, did seek to place the drawings in a framework of connoisseurship and in a general order of merit. Though it attracted fire for being too dryly academic in the process, it provided the novice with

some notion of how a work of art is perceived by a viewer with whom to contend.

Mr Wilton-Ely's personal more than that of the lecturer, more that of the historian, museum-based connoisseur, qualities—which more or less lend themselves to a book exhibition—permeate *The Art of Piranesi*. Just published from the exhibition catalogue (304pp, Thames and Hudson) is a nicely written text fully fleshes Mr Wilton-Ely's thesis, and its large plates illustrate the *Vedute di Roma*. The volume is a substantial scholarly contribution to the assessment of Piranesi that is early in this century and grows in reputation. It is a pleasure to think that one will refer to Mr Wilton-Ely's book and its elegant catalogue together with this excellent one for many years to come.

Netsuke

Selected Pieces
Volume 6: Baur Collection Catalogues
MARIE-HERSE COULLERY and
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This volume is the first in the series to deal with Japanese art. It illustrates and describes 1,200 selected netsuke of the Baur Collection covering all the manufacturing centres. The collection is particularly rich in netsuke created by artists who lived in the second part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century in Osaka and Tokyo. The catalogue also contains eight colour plates, an alphabetical list of 897 signatures illustrated on separate plates and a glossary and an index complete the book. 9 1/2 x 6 1/2 ins. in slip case; 8 colour plates, 150 black and white; illustrated limited edition of 2,000 numbered copies.

Special price until 31st July, 1978, £55.00.
Price from 1st August, £65.00.

Routledge & Kegan Paul

39 Store Street London WC1

The Shrew's revenge

By Lorna Sage

Audiences of *The Taming of the Shrew* at Stratford are in for a diverting first ten minutes. The stage to start with, is an elegant, pastel-painted box, complete with a green view into an Italian garden. "That's funny," muttered a lady behind me darkly. "I've never seen a proscenium arch here before. . . . It is modern dress, isn't it?" She need not have worried: just when everyone has had time to develop a thorough dislike for the smug little set, there is the unmistakable noise of someone making a scene, and Jonathan Pryce, lacking a ticket and clutching a bottle, is pursued to the front of the auditorium by an outraged usherette. He leaps on in the stage (everyone has now got the idea), "destroys" the scenery, "fuses" the lights and generally tears the picture-frame apart, in a euphoric ritual of liberation.

It is beautifully done (the rest of the cast rushing round in undress, helping the stage manager etc), and works very well, even if it is hard to believe that Stratford would ever employ such a shrewish usherette. As a way of dealing with one of Shakespeare's more elaborate and mysterious early pieces of "induction"—drunken Christopher Sly conning into believing he is a lord, and forced to watch the play—it seemed altogether ingenious and intelligent. And it imports the right degree of sketchiness to the "real" set: a bleakish assemblage of ladders and levels inhabited by comic-strip Italians. Jonathan Pryce goes off to get into character for Petruchio, and the business of the play proper grinds into motion.

As the programme notes announce, director Michael Bogdanov is mainly interested in two themes: the image of man the huntsman, and the female reflection of that, women as chasteles. He has made over Shakespeare's Padua (always rather too insistently plain) with characters catching each other on place names as if to prove he had got the geography right into a version of Italy as a Third World country, with petty domestic dictatorship in morning coats wheeler-dealing in dowries. You are not conscious, for instance, of the male as a solid, plural power bloc, while the women are lone, foxy individuals, competing with each other as well as battling fathers and husbands. Woman is singular: Paola Dionisotti as Katharina decidedly so. She looks tremendous; lantern-jawed, her frizzy brush of hennaed hair cut in a sort of wedge, so that although the play doesn't offer her much scope for establishing just what a shrew is, you know very well what she is after her first entrance, skinny and quivering in an ecstasy of humiliation over her father's efforts to marry her off. "Is it your will to make a stale of me among these mates?"

For all that, it takes the production a fair time to get back to the level of the opening, partly because of the sheer amount of machinery involved in the subplots surrounding all-too-marrageable Bianca (very well done by Zoe Winters, as a sly, sniggering bitch). With the central wooing scene, however, it gathers pace again, and you get an appropriately paradoxical sense of liberation as Katharina and Petruchio's efforts to marry her off, rounding marriage—not (in this production) because erotic sparks fly, but because of the naked necessity of

the bargain they strike, he gambling for the money ("I come to wive it wealthily in Padua"), and the score, she because his steamroller tactics let her off the hook her hysterical spinsterhood has hung her up on for all to see. The wedding that ends the first half is thus played as glorious (anti) climax; everyone standing around with umbrellas just waiting for a groom who finally arrives to make a brutally frank speech about chasteles, and manages to insult his bride in about six different positions. Jonathan Pryce does Petruchio here Groucho Marx style, helped out by Ian Charleston who, as his sidekick Tranio, does a more than passable impression of Harpo. Very funny, except that the lady in question is not a pneumatic, tough, sentimental Margaret Dumont.

This means that the second half is altogether less fun. The play's images of hunting and the analogies between the techniques for taming a hawk and taming a woman (cold, hunger, lack of sleep) are placed squarely in the foreground. Petruchio not only tames Kate, but exhausts himself, and Jonathan Pryce allows a weary edge of self-

disgust to creep into the jokes. The final scene, where the three new husbands lay bets on their wives, is given a boozy, depressed post-prandial, post-hunt feel: Kate's famous speech ("But now I see our lances are but straws") is delivered in a spiritless, unreal voice and received without appreciation by the men, and with unadmirable resentment by the women. The main feeling is shame—and that the systematic deformation of Kate's character (the deformity of submission on top of spite) is being reversed in the weariness and boredom of the men. When Petruchio says "we'll be better off than we are though they have been married for years. It is an interesting and courageous (not to say feminist) way to interpret the play, but though it works in theory, I am not so sure in practice. It is very difficult to accept an emotional curve that starts with exhilaration and ends in depressed dead-end, and I had the feeling that the audience emerged into a damp afternoon more simply grumpy than thoughtful (as was intended). Still, a good production, one suffers, characteristically, from trying to make too much sense.

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The taste of tyranny

"The Arts under Napoleon," an exhibition which is on at the Metropolitan Museum in New York until July 30, is a brilliant anthology of stylistic dictatorship. Repressive regimes of the left tend to turn art into politics, but repressive regimes of the right favour the opposite deformation, and make politics into art. Napoleon legitimized himself by classifying himself, his empire and the opera—the Third Reich annexed Bayreuth, and turned squabbles about scenic design into matters of high politics. Napoleon made style a uniform, which was applied indifferently to furniture and clothing, guns and snuff boxes, wine coolers and mustard pots. He decreed that court dresses must be of Lyons silk, and prohibited cashmere shawls. He elaborated a symbolism of colour, favouring poppy in reference to the Egyptian adventure and amaranth because it was an emblem of immortality. In his introduction to the exhibition catalogue, James David Draper argues that the Napoleonic style has masculine and feminine faces, as a result of which the objects are triumphal, like the Victory candelabra, the flintlock pistols presented by Napoleon to Valdes, or the scabbard of Joachim Murat, and the legal code at 4.13 in the morning, and complimented the painter for showing him "at work while my subjects sleep".

Encasing others in style, like a uniform, Napoleon himself retires into the fixity and immutability of the icon. The Countess de Rebusat said he looked like a statue. The medallion which is cunningly apt for the dictator cultivates a one-dimensional self-image. David called the Emperor's head "beautiful as antiquity". The problem of which modern tyrants have been that physical grotesquerie, which comically humanizes them. In Leni Riefenstahl's film of the Berlin Olympics, the speedy stricken Hitler is shown in comparison with the Apollonian gymnasts. Nevertheless, these demagogues try their hardest: Idi Amin has recently placed an order for thousands of T-shirts emblazoned with his own image, rather as Napoleon's sister superintended a factory at Carrara which turned out marble busts of the Emperor copied from originals by Canova and Chaudet. Finally, the dictator becomes a victim of the art he creates for his own glorification. Thus Hitler in his bunker, surrounded by his horde of Wagner manuscripts, suddenly saw out the flames of *Götterdämmerung*; and thus, humiliated, Napoleon's downfall can be narrated as the obsolescence of a style. At the Metropolitan, the concluding exhibit is a steel engraving after Carl von Steuber, studying Napoleon's victories by charting the career of his celebrated black hat which is shown eight times over in various conditions of cocky optimism and bedraggled deceptiveness, reposing on laurel at Austerlitz, soggy withered upon the shores of the Elbe. All the Emperor leaves behind him is his clothes, no longer even new.

Finally, it's narcotics you seek. *The Gardener's Book of Weeds* will tell you how to pick out Hump Dogbane, also known as Indian Hemp, and the Opium Poppy. For the first you have to go to the United States, the second is grown commercially in Europe and has a Latin name, *Papaver somniferum*, the equal of any domesticated flower. Of it, Mrs Allan writes, ambiguously, that "the Opium Poppy found in gardens is an escape. . . . So the next time the weeds get too much for you, you may be right, beneath your hand.

Napoleon's painstaking commissions to painters, sculptors, metalworkers and silk-weavers; hence too, later, the association between Napoleon's empire and the opera—the Third Reich annexed Bayreuth, and turned squabbles about scenic design into matters of high politics. Napoleon made style a uniform, which was applied indifferently to furniture and clothing, guns and snuff boxes, wine coolers and mustard pots. He decreed that court dresses must be of Lyons silk, and prohibited cashmere shawls. He elaborated a symbolism of colour, favouring poppy in reference to the Egyptian adventure and amaranth because it was an emblem of immortality. In his introduction to the exhibition catalogue, James David Draper argues that the Napoleonic style has masculine and feminine faces, as a result of which the objects are triumphal, like the Victory candelabra, the flintlock pistols presented by Napoleon to Valdes, or the scabbard of Joachim Murat, and the legal code at 4.13 in the morning, and complimented the painter for showing him "at work while my subjects sleep".

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Now weed on . . .

There is something ignominiously vicarious about the names the English language has found for our common garden weeds. You need only say eye, or even better, ear, their unattractive vocabularies to bear them are complete reprobates and need not expect any quarter should they dare to break surface in the midst of all the euphonious beauty of the herbaceous border. Not for the faint of heart weed this name of the Sweet William, nor the dignity of the Latin gracing such as the Antirrhinum and the Delphinium (bastard formations which do not happen). The gardener does not boast of his weeds, he polioles for them; only the gardener, or the self-pitying landowner to the bottom of the garden, there to view a thriving thicket of the Great Hairy Willow Herb. The scolded names by which weeds are called invite their unfeeling despatch. Only a slightly awed growth, so base and vulgar as to be generally known as the Swamp Lovewort, is in for the instant dash of the paragon when he subjects the one-eyed Creeping Charley, a horticultural anomaly which is unintelligent as it is

sounds easily the most potential of all. Its spore wiggling in by the billion from the Orient on the prevailing easterlies. Decent upstanding flowers naturally don't creep, they climb; they have backbone. But your weed by contrast is a sticky fellow who prefers to cover in a horizontal position rather than straighten up and be seen. No gardener is going to waste his sympathy on something as hogishly inert as the Prostrate Pigweed; he may well want to slip on an extra pair of gardening gauntlets before stooping to lay hands on the Clanny Ground-Cherry. And even when a weed is man enough to stand erect, it may only be the better to broadcast its highly offensive smell, like that field intruder the Stinking Groundsel—pluck that to feed to the buggies and the talkative little pets may ask to be let out of the cage.

The Gardener's Book of Weeds isn't all stinkers, however, and Mrs Allan has some quite genial things to say on behalf of the friendlier species. Some weeds turn out to be good for you. If you are a monk, for example, and hitting the bottle, you could try stewing the Ground Elder uprooted from the monastery garden instead of incinerating it, in case it really is a cure for gout. Some weeds sound as if they ought to be good for you. If you are not the Bladder Camp, alas, will do nothing very much for your bladder, and lying on a bed of Pilewort will probably not sooth that other painful complaint. Some weeds are definitely bad for you: Mrs Allan gives a list of the toxic varieties, in which

Oxford University Press

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W. H. Thorpe

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David Daube was Regius Professor of Civil Law at Oxford from 1955 to 1970. These essays are offered to him by a group of Christian New Testament scholars in gratitude for the generosity with which he has always been ready to assist their studies out of his immense store of Jewish learning. £15

The Future of the World Economy

A United Nations Study
Wassily Leontief, Anne P. Carter, and Peter Petri

This is a paperback edition of the book first published in September 1977. Paper covers £3

To the Editor

Algeria

Sir,—In your issue of May 12 you publish a communication from Mr. Hugh Roberts of the University of East Anglia. It would be easy, albeit a tedious labour, to unravel its confusions, misrepresentations and irrelevances, and to separate out the elements of cliché, slogan and fancy which make up its particular version of Algerian economic and political history. Fancy, for instance, in its arcanist vision of pre-conquest Algeria, when all the evidence we have indicates that it was a poor, rude and primitive country; fashionable cliché, for example, when he speaks of "the absolute impoverishment" of the Algerians under French rule, when the land in 1962 was supporting more than three times the population it did in 1830; slogan, as when he absolutely makes his own the official Algerian line that the French killed a million Algerians during the rebellion—a figure the sole merit of which is that it is a large, easily remembered round number. Your correspondent's other assertions are on a par.

But this is not the most remarkable feature of a document issuing from a seat of learning. Strident and abusive, it harangues, hectors and rants, as though your readers were a People's Court and I being assigned before them. But since, happily, you do not compel reviewers to answer your correspondents, there is neither necessity nor obligation to suffer the nuisance of converse with such of them as ignore, or are ignorant of, the whereabouts of debate and of the common rules of civility—rules which, need I say it in these pages, are essential to the welfare of learning and letters.

ELIE KEDOURIE,
The London School of Economics,
Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE.

Bisexuality

Sir,—Despite my letter to the contrary (May 5), I can find no mention in Charlotte Wolff's *Bisexuality—A Study of an Alteration of Sexual Attitudes during the Menstrual Cycle*. I am glad she thinks it a significant point, as I do too, and it was precisely the contention in my review that none of the authorities (Dr Wolff included) have

thought fit to study menstrual experience in depth, though it is clearly of immediate importance to every woman. This is also a theme in the book written by Penelope Shuttle and myself on the menstrual cycle, *The Wound: Menstruation and Everwoman*, which is to be published by Gollancz on May 25.

Dr Wolff refers me testily to her page 29. Indeed, I marked this page in my review copy, disappointed. It speaks of Freud's theories, which included a 28-day cycle, which was not the menstrual cycle, and Laycock's notions of "periodical changes in the seasons, particularly during the equinoxes". There is no mention on this page of that actual and immediate periodicity of menstruation that has been so long left unstudied. I also think that Dr Wolff is a bit hard on Havelock Ellis, who, following Marie Stopes, got closer to actual observation than anybody, perhaps, before Money and Ehrhardt (*Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, 1942, 12, pp 218f).

PETER REDGROVE,
Palmouth, Cornwall.

British Library Catalogues

Sir,—One appreciates the coverage given by Bruce Barker-Benfield to the British Library's *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts 1750-1782* in your columns (May 5), but may I correct him on a few points?

First, he refers to the unfortunate pricing policy of the British Museum Publications that "has put this excellent catalogue beyond the means of the private scholar"—this company acts for the British Library and the published price of a British Library book is entirely that institution's decision, not one taken by British Museum Publications Ltd.

Second, his comments on the book's "unlucky physical appearance" appear curious, since the style and presentation followed by the printer is that of previous Catalogues of Additions.

Third, his pious hope that this catalogue will be "the first of a splendid series" is a little odd considering that the published price of Catalogues of Additions to the Manuscripts spans the years 1783-1945 in twenty-four volumes. Admittedly, these volumes were published

by the British Museum before the transfer of the collections to the British Library in July 1973, but it does seem somewhat partisan to disregard them because of this, if casual reader, it is one of those unfortunate occurrences that, as it happens, all subsequent volumes to 1782 were published previously, up to 135 years ago—the earliest in 1843, reprinted in 1964. All these earlier volumes are available, and at prices well below what it would cost to reprint, let alone re-originate them today.

PETER CLAYTON,
British Museum Publications Ltd,
6 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3RA.

Hašek

Sir,—It is fascinating, via Paris and Lancashire, to try to work out with Sir Cecil Parrott some of the footnotes to revolution and politics in Mongolia, Buryatia and Czechoslovakia. Taking them up in the order in which they occur in Sir Cecil's letter (April 28), comments can be made on the following points:

When Hašek wrote to the Czech Communist Bureau in Moscow, building up a case to be allowed to stay in Siberia, he would hardly be likely to mention Sühkhbatar by name, because at that time Sühkhbatar was not yet an eminent revolutionary, but an ardent young would-be revolutionary.

When Hašek wrote the "Mongolian name" of the Buryat paper he was editing, he had to use the Russian alphabet, getting as near as he could to the Buryat pronunciation, because the adopted Cyrillic alphabet (the one used in the book) had several special and different letters (which educated Buryats knew) was still written with the "uigur" script derived from the medieval Estrangelo-Syriac script.

It was rare to find Buryats who "literate". Not to read, as all that. Partly because they were on the extreme northern fringe of Buddhism, the Buryats had a strong tradition in Tibetan and Sanskrit scholarship, and after the coming of the Russians a few of them began going to universities like that of Kazan. There was a school at Irkutsk that turned out students just below the university level.

There was enough of an intelligentia to supply adherents to all the Russian political parties. There were Buryat officers in the Siberian Cossack regiments. Ataman Semenov was half Buryat.

Could Sühkhbatar have been one of Husek's translators? We can safely answer that he could not. He knew less Russian than his companion and later successor, Chobalsan, who had attended the Irkutsk school. Even Chobalsan, when he and Sühkhbatar were pleading with a Bolshevik representative for arms, was not quite sure of himself and asked if he could bring along, as interpreter, a Buryat whom he had known at school. Both asking for arms and using Buryats as experts were Mongolian initiatives, and this ought to dispose of the canard, which has been swimming around since the 1920s, that it was the Russians who manufactured the Mongolian Revolution and planted Buryats to run it.

It is a pity that the Buryat paper "had little impact on" the illiterate "revolutionary masses", one must remember the leverage of a small (in medieval Europe) intelligentsia. Writing was authoritative, whether it was a Tibetan text in the hands of a lama monk or a new revolutionary paper in the hands of an agitator. If a member of the new intelligentsia, addressing possible recruits was able to say "and it says so here in this paper", that enormously multiplied the force of his words.

OWEN LATTIMORE,
26 rue de Picpus, 75012 Paris.

Ivy Compton-Burnett

Sir,—Early in 1979 an entire issue of *Twentieth-Century Literature*, for which I was guest editor, will be devoted to the work of Ivy Compton-Burnett. Contributions should be sent before the middle of August of this year.

CHARLES BURKHART,
Department of English, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa 19122.

Goebbels

Sir,—E. K. Bramsted (May 5) has spotted a wrong reference in my introduction to *The Goebbels Diaries*. I apologize for this error. The footnote reference on page xxiii should be not to *The Goebbels Diaries*, edited by L. P. Lochner (1948), but to *The Secret Conferences of Dr. Goebbels*, edited by Will A. Joekle (English translation 1967).

HUGH TRIVOR-ROPER,
Oriol College, Oxford.

Fifty years on . . .

The Gangs of New York, by Herbert Asbury, New York, by the TLS of May 17, 1928, by E. Murgador.

Mr Asbury states that gangs such as those whose misdoings he describes no longer exist. The last of them were dispersed recently, and with them went what had been a nuisance and a danger to New York for nearly a hundred years. Their stronghold was the Bowery, and districts which we should call slums. . . . After allowing for oppression, exploitation, ignorance and poverty, one is apt to think the European slum criminal as much doomed against as sinning—as feeble and, in a sense, passive, even when violent. For good or for evil, the American will not find such excuses earlier this year.

C. H. Sisson was a member of the Civil Service from 1936 to 1972. JONATHAN SUMPTON's *The Albion Crusade* was published earlier this year.

LAVINIA TAYLOR is the author of *Depliances and Society*, 1971. ERNST TUENDEL is the author of *Max Planck in Starnberg*. E. S. TURNER's books include *May I Please your Lordship*, 1971, and *Amazing Grace*, 1975.

RICHAUD USABINE's *Wodehouse at Work to the End* was published last year.

J. R. VINCENT is the editor of *Diabolical: the Conservative Party and the House of Derby: the Political Journals of Lord Stanley 1849-1869* which will be published in June by the Harvester Press.

ALAN YOUNG's edition of *Edgar Rickford: Essays and Opinions*, Volume 2, will be published later this year.

DAVID JONES is a Lecturer in History at University College, Swansea. DAVID KIRBY's collection of poems, *The Opera Lover*, was published last year.

SIR OSBERT LANCASTER's recent books include *The Littlehampton Bequest*, 1973, and (with Anne Scott-James) *The Pleasure Garden*, 1977. PATRICK MCCARTHY is the author of *Celine*, 1975.

R. S. PETERS's *Education and the Education of Teachers* was published last year.

A. R. PREST is Professor of Economics at the London School of Economics.

PETER PRINCE's novel, *Agents of a Foreign Power*, was published earlier this year.

C. H. Sisson was a member of the Civil Service from 1936 to 1972.

JONATHAN SUMPTON's *The Albion Crusade* was published earlier this year.

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Information please

Henry Robert Addison, author of *Whose Whore?* about any information him.

Lora Van Brunt, 11, 8000 Brugg, Belgium.

Margaret C. Anderson, editor, *Little Review*, whose letters to or from her or to editor Jane Heap, for a book, 100 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10010.

Barbara Leigh Smith, 1827-91, feminist, whose letters by her or to those at Girton College, Cambridge, for a book, 100 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10010.

Shella R. Bay, 8001 Bay Parkway, Brooklyn, New York 11214.

William Ernest Bently, about any information him, for a biography, 267 Goodman's Hill Road, University, 350 Main Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02176.

David Jones: contact his owners of his painted book (other than those who tutored), for a complete book, 400, Dawblers House, Long Abingdon, Oxfordshire, 400.

W. M. Lindsay: where his letters and papers are, for an edition of his palaeography, Peter Corp, Corpus Christi College, bridge.

Johann Most (1846-1906), whereabouts of any letters for a biography, 19122.

Frederic T. Department of Speech, University of Pennsylvania, 19122.

William Patterson, author of *Four Journeys to the Country of the Hottentots*, 1789: where any information about his and early career, A. T. Insitute of Historical Research, University of London, House, London WC1E 6BT.

H. D. C. Pepler: whereabouts of letters to or from him, especially his time as Deputy Mayor of Thynne Hall or when he was in charge of the Working Men's Club of Hampshire House (1914), for a biography, 9 Camden Hill Road, W8 7DX.

Samuel Seymour, author of *The Steppe*, Longue to the Rocky Mountains, 1819-20: whereabouts of information about the drawings of the Rocky Mountains, or any of Seymour's paintings, 91108.

Cecily Fox Smith, whereabouts of any biographical material, 91108.

Puffin Books, 17 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1P 3HT.

Stubb's *Anatomy of the Horse*, contact with any of this or eighteenth or nineteenth century editions, 91108.

Slack Dyke Farm, 177, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, 21F.

Anthony Trollope: any information about manuscript and printed materials, for a book, 91108.

Department of English, Community College, New York, New York 10025.

James Trubshaw, whereabouts of any letters to or from him, for a book, 91108.

1, Thorn Road, Bramhall, Cheshire, 91108.

The Biggs boys

By Peter Prince

THE TRAIN ROBBERY
30pp. W. H. Allen, £5.95.

It is, as Peter Paul Read disarmingly admits in the course of his book, a rather stale story. There had been overwhelming press coverage at the time, and by the mid-1970s (when most of the robbers were released from jail and had to start earning their living) it was a Glasgow to London mail train had already been the subject of several books, innumerable articles, and at least one film. But to imagine any new interest in this story would be to underestimate the extent of its interest to the public and its place in the repertoire of the crime novel.

The robbers, however, were men of proven resource and imagination. Their solution, in two words, was "Our Skorzony". The man who had been in the Skorzony in 1934, reputed founder of the legendary ODESSA network for the post-war protection of surviving SS members, was not the man behind the crime as grand and daring as the Great Train Robbery?

Such an any rate was the story that the robbers' agent—a South African property dealer named Gary Van Dyke—was dangling before London publishers in the early months of 1976. Not just that Skorzony had put up the money to finance the operation but that several of his agents—identified in *The Train Robbers* as "Horst", "Karl", "Sig", "Klaus", "Hume", "Schmidt"—were actively involved with the robbers and the robbery at various stages, even that one of them—"Sig"—was present at Leatherhead Farm when the gang were hiding there before and after looting the train. Such was the story—had it been true it would have been quite a scoop—that caused Mr Read to accept the commission to write the robbers' own tale. He settled down to his researches in the summer of 1976.

In February 1977 Mr Read flew to Rio de Janeiro to interview the most famous robber of them all: Ronnie Biggs, the One Who Got Away. It was, as Mr Read makes clear in his very account of the meeting, a most interesting experience. In their first conversation, the inebriated Biggs blew clean apart the whole fragile Skorzony connection—"The trouble is, Piers, there aren't any Germans", and despite much energetic bluffing on the part of the others it was never possible to get it back together again. There simply were not, apart from one or two highly tenuous possibilities, any Germans.

It isn't so stated here, but at this stage, with the heat fully rumbled, both author and publisher must have thought of abandoning the whole project, even though substantial sums of money had already been spent on it. In the event Mr Read decided to persist, and a reading of *The Train Robbers* convinces that he was right to do so—just about. Stripped of the Hamish extraneous, the account of the actual robbery does not seem very

friends to face jail sentences totaling 308 years.

The Court of Appeal at aside one conviction for lack of corroborating evidence and reduced some of the terms of imprisonment. They also declared that they found the practice of using Queen's Bench to keep the ends of justice disastrous.

This poses a question of crucial importance: in what circumstances is it justifiable to subordinate ethics to politics? To many it will seem outrageous that Smalls should go a free man after compounding his own villainy by "grassing" him from any wish to help the police but to save himself from a long prison sentence. The bargain struck by the Director unquestionably resulted in the public good, but it could hardly be said that justice was done to him. The authors do not tell us whether it was the Director who took so momentous a decision or—as seems likely—the Attorney General? And, given the dual nature of the latter's duty, would he have been able, as surely it should be, to debate the particular circumstances of a practice that has been criticized by the judiciary for three centuries? It is, after all, no light matter when expediency prevails so blatantly over principle in public affairs.

A society in which the police were able more effectively to fight large-scale professional criminals would have no need to resort to such tactics, and the authors give a brilliant and at times disquieting exposé of police methods of following up clues, buying information from the underworld, arresting and interrogating suspects and investigating complaints against themselves. Of course much has changed since 1972—the year Sir Robert Mark became Commissioner. A special Robbery Squad was set up soon after the Wembley raid, and the number of bank robberies fell to twenty-six in the following year. Yet the impression remains that our undermanned police are fighting a desperate battle against highly sophisticated criminals.

There is much else of interest. The authors provide an insight into the background of the principal robbers ("fundamentally local lads"), speculate on their motives (beyond mere greed?—and give lively account of the Old Bailey trials in 1974. The book has some good illustrations, an index and, at the end, a helpful list of characters.

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King and priest, build Egyptian and Mayan and Aztec and countless other cities, with their architecture bicameral in every sense of the word.

But actually the mind posited is a simple mechanism akin to that of the experimental rat. It meets the demands of life by automatic responses under guidance from the monitor within. There is no hesitation, muttering in oneself, questioning "what to do next", for this would presuppose an "I" feeling helpless before a puzzle and having a conscious will to resolve it. The weasel word "adaptation" will not account for the pursuit of social utility on the large scale of armies, temples, palaces—which requires concerted effort, discipline, "thinking what to do next". What bicameral behaviour lacks, in short, is the chief characteristic of mind, namely purpose.

When the bicameral pattern is eventually broken, the newly emerging mind is simple. It is largely automatic as before ("thinking is not conscious") and gives no sign of possessing what James called the "fringe" of feelings, ideas, and sensations which "in an instant" says James, "by a change of attention, one can bring into the central field of consciousness". Attention follows purpose and being thus brought into play summons up memories, associations, and habits. And since these come into conscious being, they must be considered as belonging to it. No automaton will serve. Thus in writing these lines, I come to a halt, seeking the right phrase and not finding it immediately, I stop searching for an instant and the phrase floats up (as it seems) of its own accord. But this volitional reply is neither god nor machine. It is conscious mind at work, pursuing a purpose by choosing among its stored-up resources. If there were no conscious call or judgment of what fits, the absent-minded pianist would not stop and correct himself when he plays a wrong note.

No, consciousness is both too fluid and too versatile to be planned down to what it can do or must be. Professor James himself doubts whether it can ever be fully understood by conscious thought: it is like the eye trying to see its own seeing. He also admits that a knowledge of brain processes will not yield an illumination of consciousness. The relation of mind to brain is not accessible to analysis. That the relation holds is unquestioned, but as William James pointed out, the extreme plasticity and instability of "the blood-curdle of experience" in the brain, both fosters the unpredictable powers of the human mind and makes mechanical correlations undependable: the brain can compensate for its own defects and imperfections, and amazingly localized functions can shift their ground.

Are we to believe, then, that the bicameral brain which could sing the *Ubi*, write Hamurabi's code, and build the Pyramids, lacked that plasticity which now affords us consciousness? If the answer is yes, some physical change must be cited to account for our altered state. And if this cannot be done, it seems gratuitous to suppose a different mind for mankind's earlier days, especially when its social and literary products resemble ours so closely.

But armed with a hypothesis, our author is easily tempted to see vestiges of bicameral behaviour after its stated breakdown—for instance, in Joan of Arc, Blake, and other famous hallucinators. One wonders why, physiologically, not invoked for at least some of these cases; for instance, Joan probably suffered from scotoma, which is known to induce a variety of cases, a theorist would recognize that genius, which is a form of high organic coordination sometimes expressed in synesthesia, tends to attribute its feats to the influence of an external power, in religious age, God leads prophet and artist, St. Augustine, post-bicameral, heard the "Tolle et lege". Secular ages speak rather of inspiration or "breathings-in": the divine afflatus is vaguely from above—or, in a demerit psychology—from below. In either case it visits the most self-conscious minds. Plato noticed its workings in the *Ion*, where the poet is shown as not knowing what he does.

In sum, the grand thesis ends by doing less than justice to both types of mind. It denies what we call ego and deliberate intelligence in the human beings who launched civilization, and it forgets that

consciousness as we know it has thickness—layers and degrees of feeling and thought with which it may well act in a way easily misinterpreted as bicameral.

What remains engrossing and makes Professor James's work worth reading is this very same subject of consciousness—considered as the origin properly so-called, the development of self-consciousness, which in the end is what the author is really interested in.

In such a treatment one would naturally begin by questioning the notion of linear advance from one "mind" to another. And perhaps even before one would ask some tenable, anyway, is the conception of "a mind" standing for whole empires and ages, particularly when that mind is deduced from literature. One can read all of Shakespeare without suspecting a surrounding world seething with religious fury. And although we may take art and literature as expressing an important, sometimes dominant, attitude in society, high culture gives no warrant for supposing all or most of a people equipped with the corresponding "mind". What is called a common faith—say, in the Middle Ages—runs from superstition to mysticism, taking in diverse philosophies in between.

And from the author's point of view should we not think that the Middle Ages, heeding the voice of God and often hearing it, may have relapsed into the preconscious bicameral, long after the one-chambered author of Ecclesiastes? The human mind, more likely, is of one sort and changes with time and place irregularly, through the shifting emphasis of varying intellectual conceptions, themselves the product of special need and purpose. In a sceptical age, nobody believes in the id or superego as driving the mind even more harshly. Man's age of being pushed and his age of being free always coexist, though not in the same proportions.

Are we to say, then, that Freud and the depth psychology of the moment depicted a wished-for return to bicameral dictation? And what about the rival determinisms in nature, those of science and of magic? All of them have arisen and prospered in a period when consciousness of self was simultaneously rising to the highest peak on record, that is, among the enlightened, educated, Romantic-

Thinking affectively

By R. S. Peters

JEROME NEU:
Emotion, Thought and Therapy
194pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£6.95.

Emotion, Thought and Therapy is a scholarly work which fails to grip the reader partly because of the lack of balance in its presentation and partly because its implications for therapy seem academic in relation to actual problems of modern psychiatry.

The first part is a long, elaborate and rather laboured refutation of the Humanist view that emotions are essentially feelings with thoughts contingently attached to them, and a defence of the Spinozistic thesis that emotions are thought-dependent. Feelings are dependent upon interpretations of and beliefs about objects and situations. The point of this lengthy excursion into the history of philosophy is to show that for Spinoza, the intellect provides a more satisfactory philosophical foundation for Freudian and Jungian therapies. "That is, we can begin to understand how people's emotional lives might be transformed by conversion of emotional interpretation of their memories, beliefs, etc.; how knowledge might help one to be free". In the actual working out of the implications of the theories of emotion for psychotherapy, however, there are more or less vestiges from the scene. Little is made, for example, of the connection between his associationism and modern theories of conditioning. Spinoza takes over as the primary source of Freud's "treatment of the ego", which is treated as an external power, in religious age, God leads prophet and artist, St. Augustine, post-bicameral, heard the "Tolle et lege". Secular ages speak rather of inspiration or "breathings-in": the divine afflatus is vaguely from above—or, in a demerit psychology—from below. In either case it visits the most self-conscious minds. Plato noticed its workings in the *Ion*, where the poet is shown as not knowing what he does.

In sum, the grand thesis ends by doing less than justice to both types of mind. It denies what we call ego and deliberate intelligence in the human beings who launched civilization, and it forgets that

ism, individualism, the journey into the self have engendered a new sort of double mind—the "second man" within, who watches, compares, and carps derisively; who stifles impulse, sport, pleasure, and ingrain, guilt and angst.

That these conditions are the handwork of "language" is true if one means it broadly. It would be clearer to say that ideas, spread and super-refined through words—metaphors, in Professor James's sense—are at the source. But these, from the beginning of language, have been invented, as Ronald Englefield has argued; they have not grown of their own accord like weeds. Over a hundred years ago, Goethe saw in contemporary art and literature the cause of Western man's ever-enlarging consciousness of self, and he thought that in our century life would become intolerable. A witness of our time, Kazimierz Brandy, confirms the prediction.

Modernity has crept into language. My [preceding] re-

marks themselves . . . are a modern reflex, a symptom of self-consciousness, of our "self-diagnosing" culture, of our autocommunicating, of thought thinking of thought. Never, perhaps, have there been so many thinkers thinking at once, probably never so many stupid ones. Everything is studied—time, speech, copulation, art and all their "structures". Everything is subject to science; everything fulfils the function of knowing.

Professor James's book was designed to show the structure of an earlier mind, which accomplished feats without any of this relentless knowing. The great charm of such a creature makes one wonder whether the elaborate scholarly undertaking was well inspired by nostalgia. It is a tendency of high civilizations to invent primitivism. The rationale of the drug experience, Norman O. Brown's advocacy of baby impulsiveness through life, others' longing for peaceful lunacy,

Diamond Day

The diamonds when they are blue clay.
The colour of corpses, die easily
At the beginning of their career, but later on
They are almost eternal. Only certain carbon is suitable.
In the blue pipe, this Cullinan diamond was formed.
From an entire mammoth that lurched into the volcano:
See all those tusks and hair reduced in a flare
To a few ounces of glittering soil. Is the mammoth
Jappy in the diamond? It is mammoth-heaven
Within that diamond and we cannot get there.
Except by jumping into a volcano if we have the call.
But then geology might not choose us, and we wouldn't know
Until we woke up in the diamond's eye:
Millions of years have passed, Kufka's novels,
With interminable delays and unassuming powers
Describe geology on behalf of Prague City,
Which was and is stone wishing to become diamond,
Having collected enough carbon-based life indoors,
But it is half-paralysed with cutting and fitting;
Every block cut, every facade, loses its memory.
America's intrigue was to fuse diamond in the atomic flash:
Populations participate, provide pure carbon.
Now sss on your Parents, look down and turn the facets:
In the mammoth, rather of his own soul
Long-haired sage in a condition of sexual arousal,
As he looked as he dove into the hot rock of rebirth.
(But will she stand, as the city goes up, a diamond?)

Peter Redgrove

Spinoza combine sound, scholarly exposition with a critical commentary well supported by reference to modern philosophical work on the concept of "emotion". Jerome Neu has little difficulty in showing that Hume's attempt to set himself up as the Newton of the social sciences by postulating impressions and ideas held together by principles of association, paralleling atoms held together by gravitation, is fraught with incoherences—particularly in the case of his account of emotions. For in fact, for example, the feeling of not just causally or associatively connected with the perception of the object of fear. Spinoza's contention that emotions essentially involve thought, and are to be distinguished by the character of the thoughts involved, is much more tenable. Spinoza is particularly interesting on the various mechanisms for transforming emotion, particularly through changing beliefs about their objects and sources. In this respect he anticipated Freud.

Having established the primacy of thought in emotion, Professor Neu passes to the implications of his thesis for therapy. He claims that types of therapy can be arranged along a spectrum in accordance with the role that they assign to thoughts. At one end are drugs and shock treatment. These are because, because thoughts or beliefs of the patient play no part in the cure in so far as they are effective. This may be so, but physical treatment poses a problem for Neu's general thesis about the importance of thought in changing emotional states; for manic-depressive psychoses, for example, are an affective disturbance, and yet it is absolutely imperative to psychoanalytic techniques. Even Freud admitted that he could do nothing with depressives. But it is the one psychosocial condition which can, in the majority of cases, be successfully dealt with by the

judicious use of modern drugs. How it is that changes in metabolism and in the chemistry of the brain produce such specific symptoms is as mysterious as how a simple substance like lithium helps to restore some kind of mental equilibrium. But the results achieved suggest that there are important discoveries in future are going to be in details of the mind-brain relationship, rather than in the relationship between thought and emotion, which is Professor Neu's main preoccupation (see Stuart Miller's *Breakdown*, 1976). This failure to discuss the most common and spectacular form of affective disorder connects with a defect in Professor Neu's treatment of "emotion", which is that he says nothing about moods, of which depression is an extreme case. There is, of course, a thought aspect of moods, but instead of the affect being aroused by it, it is as if the affect determines the way in which the object or situation is viewed. Moods present interesting conceptual problems as well as intractable personal predicaments.

Behaviour therapies are next discussed. The theories from which such therapies stem assign no role to thought. But Professor Neu summons Chomsky and others to his aid in arguing that thoughts are present lurking behind the facade of the "stimulus" and "response" jargon. He grants that phobias may be removed by conditioning techniques but asks pertinently, whether this shows that such techniques are likely to be effective with the classical psychoneuroses.

The thought and of the spectrum of therapy is introduced by a discussion of T. S. Eliot's analysis of shamanism. The place of community consensus about someone's powers in endowing him with such powers is examined and endorsed; so is the importance of psycho-social coherence in so far as this

the various recipes. Eastern Western, for example, expand nesses (really blurring the line) attempts to determine the recover the condition image the biographer of Bismarck).

But in contrast with the origins in general, the hard-headed investigation of Richard Leakey, Geoffrey compels us to remain with either we do not know or a mercurial metaphor as the dividing mortal" of the mind the obvious doubts expressed.

The over-present danger is William James called the biologist's fallacy, which is a tribute to the living conditions which the observer perceives outside. How easy to suppose the Norso heroics of the cultate Swede has no how tempting to infer from or chimpanzee (both, by the unannounced by Professor kind of linguistic mind we holleyn in 1. As for the regime, Khrushchev's instigation of the potentially more disastrous Cuban missile crisis partly resulted from his perception of Kennedy as weak and indecisive.

In contrast, the Soviet leadership more accurately perceived that they would resort to force to act in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968 without provoking action by the United States or Nato in support of East European reformers. Likewise, the Soviet Union continued to arm communist forces in South Vietnam after American withdrawal and thereby contributed to the complete communist victory in that country and a humiliating defeat for the United States. The Soviet decision-makers had accurately perceived the balance of opinion within the United States and the mood within the administration and Congress to be such that even open exposure of the fact that the Americans had comprehensively lost the war in Vietnam would not lead to any further attempt by the US to become militarily engaged in that country.

Even if, however, the importance of such perceptions is accepted, how should one set about investigating the Soviet image of the United States? Judgments about the grounds that it is impossible to distinguish between those elements in Soviet propaganda which the propagandists do not themselves believe and those which accurately reflect genuine Soviet attitudes and the rival superpower? Stephen Gilbert suggests that those who would dismiss most of what Soviet leaders say as "mere rhetoric" and argue that attention should be paid only to what they do are guilty of introducing a false dichotomy. This he argues, is especially so in an age of détente when verbal communication has assumed a new importance. Given the presence of underlying military power to back strong words, a great deal turns on the impression of political will, lack of it, which is created in speech and in writings.

But which speeches and whose writings? The new breed of Soviet cosmologists have learnt to distinguish between the pronouncements of those in the United States who carry political weight and those who do not, and to assess the likely effects and limits on the influence of particular institutions.

One would hope to find the same kind of discrimination in Western analysis of Soviet statements and actions. The task of the cosmologist, it must be admitted, is not easy. A wide range of views of the Soviet Union have been put forward, from the foreign and defence policy of the nineteenth-century Yiddish "classics", and the linguistic influences of West European literature. The prose-writers included the remarkable talents as the impressionist David Bergelson and the symbolist Der Nister ("The Hidden One")—who drew on the Cabbalah as much as on the German Romanticists. These were all young, the oldest among them were barely into their thirties—and all to a lesser or greater degree were attracted to the ideals of socialism. Who, indeed, among the secular Jewish intellectuals, at the time did war against the Jewish religion, the ultimate embodiment of the process of Enlightenment in Palestine, some in the teeming townships of New York's Lower

Moscow's White House-ologists

By Archie Brown

STEPHEN P. GIBERT:
Soviet Images of America
167pp. Macdonald and Jane's.
£10.50.

How political leaders perceive other nations and their leaders is a matter of great political consequence. And how the superpowers perceive each other is clearly a matter of special importance, for the foreign and military policies which these perceptions help to determine affect us all.

The Bay of Pigs fiasco was partly a result of the perception within the American administration of extreme dissatisfaction on the part of the Cuban people with the Castro regime. Khrushchev's instigation of the potentially more disastrous Cuban missile crisis partly resulted from his perception of Kennedy as weak and indecisive.

In contrast, the Soviet leadership more accurately perceived that they would resort to force to act in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968 without provoking action by the United States or Nato in support of East European reformers. Likewise, the Soviet Union continued to arm communist forces in South Vietnam after American withdrawal and thereby contributed to the complete communist victory in that country and a humiliating defeat for the United States. The Soviet decision-makers had accurately perceived the balance of opinion within the United States and the mood within the administration and Congress to be such that even open exposure of the fact that the Americans had comprehensively lost the war in Vietnam would not lead to any further attempt by the US to become militarily engaged in that country.

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Institute—the fact that the variety of opinion to be found in various circles in Moscow is only dimly reflected in officially published works written by the Soviet Union—it is nevertheless disappointing to find a heterogeneous collection of Soviet political leaders, Americanologists, military men and journalists indiscriminately described as "Moscow's spokesmen". Though what emerges from the study is probably reasonably representative sample of Soviet views of the United States (which does something to illustrate the growing sophistication of Soviet assessments of American politics and of American military power), it is rather an undistinguished collection of the opinions and perceptions characteristic of particular institutes and institutions.

Within their self-imposed limits, and given that they are writing more for an American political public than a specialist academic one, Professor Gilbert and his research team do usefully synthesize and summarize an extensive body of Soviet writing about the West. Gilbert also rightly pinpoints another "false dichotomy" (to stand alongside Soviet words and

Soviet actions) when he attacks those who make a sharp distinction between Marxist-Leninist ideology and Soviet national interest and thus provoking the tiresome debate about which is the principal determinant of Soviet actions. The greater glory of the Soviet Union and the spread of official Marxism-Leninism in fact go hand in hand, because Marxism-Leninism is a body of doctrine open to various emphases and interpretations, and the Soviet leadership have the official power to uphold their own official interpretation of it. The resultant ideology not only legitimizes the "leading role" of the Communist Party and centralization of power within it—and thus defends the leadership's domestic interests—but simultaneously legitimizes their attempts to extend Soviet spheres of influence abroad in the name of "proletarian internationalism" and the struggle against capitalism and imperialism.

Marxist-Leninist ideology "does not, however, actively serve leadership from the task of making difficult policy choices. A better educated, more articulate Soviet people want a more rapid improvement in living standards (which they now know to be well below the level of most Western countries) and the reality of a confident and expansionist Soviet military (like the military elsewhere) want still higher investment in the defence industry. The inclination of the party leadership

Stamping out the shtetl

By Abraham Brumberg

IRVING HOWE and
ELIEZER GREENBERG (Editors):
Aches Out of Hope
Fiction by Soviet-Yiddish Writers
218pp. New York: Schocken Books.
\$10.95.

Shortly before the Second World War, Yiddish literature, hitherto bound by the concerns and conventions of the traditional East European shtetl (small town), took a leap forward into modernity. In the United States it found a group of Yiddish poets, called Di Yunge (The Young Ones), who challenged the styles and values of their predecessors and who, under the influence of the literary movements which they were sweeping through the Western world, stoutly embarked upon a search for the refinements of individual self-expression. In Eastern Europe the quest for new forms affected prose-writers and poets alike. The sprawling novels of I. J. Singer, the darkly sensual words, a great deal turns on the impression of political will, lack of it, which is created in speech and in writings.

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East Side, and others actively participated in or at least sympathized with the struggles of the Jewish people in Poland.

Markish, Bergelson et al greeted the Russian Revolution as the harbinger of a future that was to translate their own passion for social justice and for a Jewish renaissance into reality. Some of them left Russia during the Civil War to continue their literary activities in Berlin, Hamburg, and Tel Aviv, returning several years later fully committed to the Brave New World.

Yet it was precisely this commitment that was to prove their undoing. In many respects, the fate of Yiddish writers in the Soviet Union was more tragic than that of their non-Jewish colleagues. They, too, had their "fellow-travellers", all of whom were eventually ground down by Stalin's policy of purges and the show trials. Some of them were forced to betray their own impulses, to lie, to indulge in macabre recitations, to bow to the censors and to submit to self-censorship, to praise collectivization and to glorify Stalin. And as so many others, many were rewarded for their loyalty with a bullet in their necks, or with an anonymous death in the Gulag archipelago.

But they were Jewish writers, and for this a special price was to be paid. Hebrew was abolished in the late 1930s, and the language of socialism and "bourgeois nationalism" was the state encouraged the creation of cultural institutions in Yiddish (claimed as their "mother tongue") by nearly 72 per cent of Russian Jews in the 1926 census). Indeed, between 1931 and 1934, about 350 Yiddish writers were published in the Soviet Union. Yet soon Yiddish, too, became suspect: its Hebrew element was found to be of religious obscurantism, and writers were ordered to purge their vocabulary—which is rather like French writers being forced to eliminate any words of Latin derivation. Numerous pre-Revolutionary literary works were banned, and the Yiddish literary community in the West were declared subversive. The result of these insane policies were catastrophic: by the end of the 1930s, most Russian Jews had begun to shun Yiddish, finding its use pointless at best, perilous at worst. For the intellectuals, the results were even more lethal. Even the most zealous believers among them were inexorably led to their past. As Communists, they may have welcomed the eclipse of the shtetl, as Jews, they were repelled by it. In Moscow, Rubins' superb novel *Zelmenyamer*, included in the collection, a simple peasant-like Jew from Minsk confides in his son:

"Don't think that I'm not on their side. No, I really am, . . .

has been to try to satisfy both, but the slowing-down of the economic growth rate has made such a postponement of awkward decisions ever harder to maintain.

The Soviet image of the United States is important, but it is not unchanging. It is also only one "input" in the Soviet policy-making process (in particular so far as decisions on the allocation of resources are concerned). It is not clear, therefore, that the conclusion which Gilbert draws from his study necessarily follows from an examination of Soviet perceptions of the United States (especially from one which tends to ignore or play down differences of perception within the Soviet Union). The final paragraph of this book reads:

An analysis of Soviet images of the United States and the ongoing competitive struggle between the two superpowers cannot but lead one to a pessimistic view of the future. A more antagonistic Sino-American relationship—whichever called "cold war" or some other name—would appear to be nearly inevitable. When this will occur will depend upon how quickly Americans understand the vast gulf that separates the illusion of détente from the reality of a confident and expansionist Soviet Union, determined to become the dominant world power.

Though Professor Gilbert tries for

They should have gotten rid of the tsar, very necessary. He was a nothing. . . . But when they got to our bit of religion, no, that isn't right. . . . not the least bit. . . . simply isn't nice. A wedding ought to be a wedding, a birth (circumcision) ought to be a birth and it's sometimes right to say a prayer—why not?"

Then, "Comrade Lenin is a great man. Certainly—a great man. Yet what does he know when it comes to matters of faith? . . . Let us even assume that he is touched by grace—what gives votes it mean that Moses has become a nothing? . . . The Vilna Gaon is nobody at all?"

Several years later (as Kulbak was to learn), such gentle ambivalence was no longer possible. Memories of sufferings under the Yams of the survivors of pogroms (some of which the Yiddish writers had themselves experienced) were proscribed as literary themes. During the Second World War, the surviving Yiddish writers were asked to glorify the war and to glorify Stalin. And as so many others, many were rewarded for their loyalty with a bullet in their necks, or with an anonymous death in the Gulag archipelago.

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young man from a small village who is thrust into the heady household of a rich Kiev merchant, there to encounter liberated young women, revolutionary poets and artists who alternately attract and repel him. He returns to his shtetl, strangely agitated yet relieved to find himself back in his own secure surroundings. There is little action in this story. For characters moving back and forth as if through mist, responding as much to the conflicting historical forces—secularism, Zionism, socialism, nationalism and embourgeoisement—as to the turn of this century. The other two pieces by Bergelson are equally tentative, and even though the author was sympathetic to their Bolshevik heroes, his major preoccupation was clearly with the individual caught in the throes of events that he could neither understand nor control.

Zelmenyamer, mentioned earlier, is a delightfully humorous, delicately ironic and compassionate saga of a family trying to reconcile their loyalty to traditional Jewish values, with the onslaught of modernity represented as much by demonstrators brandishing red flags as by the advent of electricity. The final story, *Under the Pear*, by Dor Nister, is a richly ornamented parable of the fate of an intellectual (the "last scholar") compelled to "go into the circus and on to the tightrope". This was among the last of his Minsk efforts to walk the tightrope of symbol, fiction, and socialist realism, with predictable—that is to say less than salutary—results.

Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg, the first of prominent American literary critics, the second a well-known Yiddish poet, had already collaborated on a number of anthologies and critical studies aimed at familiarizing the English-speaking reader with the rich and colourful world of Yiddish literature. One can only be grateful to them for establishing so fitting a monument to its most tragic chapter as well.

the most part to maintain a certain detachment from the various schools of thought about foreign policy within the United States, it is clear that his sympathies lie with those whom he describes as the "realists" who, while "acknowledging the frightfulness of nuclear war . . . believe that it is possible that such a war may be employed as a conscious instrument of national policy and thus an outcome which clearly differentiates the winner from the loser will occur". The same realists think that "détente is making it more likely that Soviet Russia, not America, will win such a war".

When the Western conduct of such a "détente" was under the overall guidance of the politically and morally bankrupt Richard Nixon, any principled defence of values contrary to official Soviet policy was out of the question. The pursuit of peace is not, however, incompatible with a refusal to be browbeaten into accepting Soviet ideological formulations and interpretations of agreements, as the recent statements at the Belgrade view of implementation of the Helsinki Agreement well illustrated. Such arguments as took place at Belgrade may cool the spurious warmth of Soviet-American relations of the sort which extended to a majority of American voters (the "realists" no doubt among them) were foolish enough to elect a president incapable of recognizing a moral value if he saw one. They need not, however, lead to the kind of acceleration of the arms race which the "realists" (on both sides) would wish upon us.

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Crisses and crosses

By Shirley Chew

WILSON HARRIS:
The Tree of the Sun
94pp. Faber. £4.50.

In *The Tree of the Sun*, which is a sequel to *Da Silva da Silva's Cultured Wilderness*, the central character attempts once again "to paint antecedents and unborn worlds". Da Silva is particularly well qualified to undertake such ventures with resourcefulness. He is an artist living in London, but "born in Brazil of Spanish and Portuguese parents" and with "invisible black antecedents as well". While in the earlier novel he had set out to paint his own past, he is now in *The Tree of the Sun* attempting to paint the lives of a childless couple, once tenants of the same flat in Holland Park Gardens and long since dead, and, through these people, into the shifting drama of a universal city, and into West Indian culture and history.

Da Silva finds Francis's unfinished book and Julia's large collection of letters hidden in a hole in the wall of the flat, and with the help of his wife, Jen, who is two months pregnant, he begins to edit the pages, and to sketch and paint these letters. In this way he becomes involved in their resurrection. The couple, also of mixed ancestry, had not been happy. A number of miscarriages and a deepening sense of failure led Julia to communicate her thoughts and feelings in the form of secret letters addressed in part to Francis and in part to a vaguely conceived but sympathetic reader. Francis's book was his way of compensating for "loss and pain endured". In real life, he had a mistress, Eleanor, who lived with an ironmonger twice her age and known as Harlequin.

It happened that Eleanor married Harlequin on the day Julia died. It happened too that Francis encountered the bridegroom on the street and was inspired to create a new fictional character out of her. In his book, it is Francis's son by Julia, also called Harlequin, who marries Eleanor while Francis's place as Eleanor's lover is taken over by Leonard, "a tall black Englishman of immigrant West Indian ancestry". At this point in this slender story, everybody begins to turn into somebody else, while da Silva, "psychologically intertwined" with Francis and "the very beginning" of Julia embraced in the very beginning, is at once himself and all of them.

One cannot deny that Wilson

Harris's powers of invention are vigorous and fertile: the design of a tree, beginning as the figure in the carpet, burgeons into Yeats's chestnut tree and the fondbearing tree of Anawak myth while the description of Julia at a carnival on Zanzibar island swings into a historical note on Kensington Gardens in the eighteenth century and then round again into an account of Julia's English ancestor who founded a sugar-cane plantation in the West Indies in the same century. Nor can one deny that, bristling in the intricate criss-cross of "parallel and estranged expeditions" which form the structure of the novel, are important ideas and themes: the precarious progress of self-discovery, the elusive bond of community, the artist's relation to his subject, the limits of his access to the truth, the extent to which art is capable of enlarging our sympathy with other lives and our understanding of life.

If then, for all its cleverness and its serious intentions, *The Tree of the Sun* neither captivates nor moves, it must be because Wilson Harris has failed to rise to some of the more common expectations one brings to the reading of a novel. His story and situations are mani-

festly so many pegs upon which to hang his symbolic weights. His characters are first and foremost mythical presences and, as such, are less inclined to see one another than to expand their impenetrable views, rather in the manner of an addressing a symposium on the Sociology of Art, or the Anthropology of Myth.

Crises have frequently compared Wilson Harris with Conrad or Patrick White, because of their shared interest in the expedition both as a physical journey and as a metaphor of self-discovery. What is not usually stressed is their different approaches as novelists—and it is a difference which marks the distance between their achievements. Conrad aimed to bring "to light the truth, manifold and one" but was passionately concerned also with the need "to make you listen, to make you feel, to make you think". Patrick White's characters have been said to cause "the world of substance to quake" but his world is solidly and unshakably there. In comparison, despite the claims which are made for his "all colours, all pigments, all illuminations, all creatures", Wilson Harris's latest novel seems at the same time desiccated and opaque.

Uncorking the bottle

By Homi Bhabha

ROY A. K. HEATH:
The Murderer
190pp. Allison and Busby. £3.95.

Wilson Harris and Roy Heath have divided the Guyanese landscape between them. Harris's quest for a native tradition of dignity drives him deep into the rainforest where the tyrannies of colonial history may be cleansed by the great Tunaikari Falls. There, in a symbolic landscape, Harris's intricate fables explore the hidden origins of the modernist tradition and suggest possibilities of psychic regeneration. Heath, by contrast, writes about life on the coastal plain, in Georgetown or up the Demerara River in the townships of Wisman and Mackenzie. His characters are not the demonic agents of Harris's magical narratives but Guyanese with easily recognizable aspirations. Bird, the hero of his first novel *A Man Comes Home*, wants a life of wealth and status; Galton Flood, the author of his new

novel, *The Murderer*, wants independence from the oppressive mother and the family which she dominates.

In Heath's "moral tales" questions of moral choice are so fraught that conventional responses to them may be merely pious. So, when Galton murders his long-suffering wife Gemma because she refuses to be entirely subservient to him, the novel does not blame or judge, nor do the ramifications of the murder become the central impulse of the action.

"Suffering was in childhood," Galton remarks near the end of the novel, "that unending strand of deprivation". And, slowly, it becomes clear that his violence and paranoia are distorted assertions of a deeply troubled personality. His great desire was to be independent, but because of the way his mother has treated him, he has never developed the self-confidence essential to independence. He is increasingly lost faith in his own perceptions. A succession of fates feed his paranoia and increase his dependence on them, until he is driven to what he considers to be his act of protest and liberation. Galton's mother, who is only displaced and delayed matricide, it falls to free him from the ghost of his mother who haunts his dreams. Heath does not raise the issue of criminality because, for him, the murderer has already been both arrested and imprisoned, and he has never been free. But there are other things that go into bottles, brother! Men! However, they don't come off, you see... A man corked in a bottle! The tragedy is that Galton cannot grasp the meaning of his image in his madness: he can only repeat: "Don't cork the bottle."

Heath's two novels communicate with uncanny precision the feel of large, complex families in "developing" societies, held together as much out of a sense of family honour as in response to the uncertainty of the economic situation. In that context, as Heath subtly shows, Gemma's murder takes on a meaning and a moral aspect. Galton's violence appears and her husband can cover it up indefinitely, making of it simply another instance of the family's weakness; the police can hardly be stirred to trace yet another "premature" "missing woman"; and her father, who wanted her off his hands in the first place, is too afraid of the scandal and the shame it might bring the family name, to report the death of his daughter.

Roy Heath has dedicated his absorbing novel to his wife, mother and sister—the endlessly fascinating, which may seem paradoxical given the portrayal of Galton's mother. But Heath is alive to the discrepancy that exists, in some societies, between the personal power of the woman in the family and the lack of influence outside it. If the murderer is the casualty of the first domain, the murdered woman is the victim of the second.

Slicks and slickers

By T. J. Binyon

WILBUR SMITH:
Hungry As The Sea
377pp. Heinemann. £5.50.

Nick Berg, ousted from his post as Chairman of Christy Marine by suave Old Etionian Duncan Alexander (who has taken over his boat, as well as his Board, by marrying Nick's ex-wife, the green-eyed millionaire Chantelle), is left with a piddling, debt-ridden salvage company. Conard aimed to bring "to light the truth, manifold and one" but was passionately concerned also with the need "to make you listen, to make you feel, to make you think". Patrick White's characters have been said to cause "the world of substance to quake" but his world is solidly and unshakably there. In comparison, despite the claims which are made for his "all colours, all pigments, all illuminations, all creatures", Wilson Harris's latest novel seems at the same time desiccated and opaque.

The Golden Dawn has engine trouble, is caught by a hurricane, begins to break up; but Nick is there to rescue Chantelle and his son, Peter, to reduce pollution to a minimum, and to tow the Golden Dawn into port. Alexander is burnt to a crisp, but Nick, staring respon-

sibly into the future and cheroot between his lips, knows that his life's work is to ensure that cad-rich crew, Samantha, the "golden girl" who walked forever beside him in light and laughter.

Mr Smith deals only in lives; like Scott Fitzgerald, he believes that the very act of difference, but he shows us the difference more clearly, and in a detail different from any other. "dark coarse hair" is "dark in flak bursts in his eyes". Alexander's chest is covered in thick golden curls, crisp and fresh lettuce leaves. And he excuses for not going to Paris slightly from ours: "I was in Monte Carlo tomorrow, being Grace with the Spring". Finally, when we see the characters to be of the flesh than us. When Nick is at the airport, he is at the airport (which has no lounge—a masterly touch of detail), is forced to sit in a common herd, he is "a man of the multitude; with unconscious grace they allowed him a place at the Vuitton briefcase on his desk". Poor Nick.

The very rich are certainly not (or a lot of us) was it, and Mr Smith makes it easy to do. His narrative is a heavy load of technical details, surges forward with a buoyant, almost irresistible, energy, running south "at the green" (maximum safe speed) setting for life 22,000 (the diesel). And criticism never harmlessly from the novel's from the Warlock's answer, what, really, cut one off? Nearly all the papers in the three volumes of his *Kleine Schriften* (1957-72) date from the 1950s.

Philosophical Hermeneutics contains translations of many of the best of these papers. Those collected in the first section of the book deal with hermeneutics, while the second section mainly contains essays on Husserl and Heidegger, including the important paper, "Phenomenological Movement". This section is a happy one. In the second section the English reader is introduced to one entire strand of twentieth-century German philosophy. These essays owe their place to the fact that the author is not only an interpreter but a contemporary and witness. The essays of the first section represent, in the opinion of the editor's excellent introduction, a more accessible introduction to Gadamer than *Truth and Method*. Although both books are equally well translated, *Truth and Method*, with its many technical introductions and digressions, makes heavy reading even in German. Anyone who wants to acquaint himself closely with Gadamer's thought will find it more to be called a systematic work than can a Chopin Sonata. Gadamer is a master of the small form.

Vernunft im Zeitalter der Wissenschaft contains six papers from lectures from the 1970s. It is important of them once again to compare the three volumes. In *Vernunft*, one can observe how Gadamer himself practices what he claims to be one of the virtues of the hermeneutic method: to learn in dialogues and to assimilate new horizons. Gadamer's own ideas evolve even more to the views he expresses than he himself seems to realize. Even at seventy, Gadamer is an undentedly progressive.

Hermeneutics "had been the national name for the art of interpreting texts. The term came to have philosophical significance when its meaning is extended to interpretation of another kind, and the first alternative to the hermeneutic method is the hermeneutic method accurately reflects Gadamer's change in their conception of hermeneutics: philosophy, which this consisted in the

The fusion of horizons

By Ernst Tugendhat

HANS-GEORG GADAMER:
Truth and Method
Translated and edited by Garrett Barden and John Cumming
551pp. Sheed and Ward. £15.
Philosophical Hermeneutics
Translated and edited by David E. Linge
230pp. University of California Press. £3.90.
Vernunft im Zeitalter der Wissenschaft
199pp. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. DM 10.80.

Hans-Georg Gadamer is probably the most distinguished of Heidegger's disciples. But as a man of broad historical culture and with an innate sympathy to dogmatism he must always have felt a bit awkward in his uncouth company. One might indeed say that if you start with Heidegger's conception of truth, but replace both the existentialism of his earlier philosophy and the mysticism of his later writings by a profound sense for the humanist tradition, you get what Gadamer calls "philosophical hermeneutics".

The apparent strangeness of this term may have been one reason why Gadamer waited until he was fifty before he published, some eighteen years ago, *Truth and Method*, the book in which for the first time he presented his position. Such was the resonance it immediately found on the Continent that in the following years he was prompted to write a substantial series of papers about the theory and application of hermeneutics. Nearly all the papers in the three volumes of his *Kleine Schriften* (1957-72) date from the 1950s.

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The experience of works of art serves Gadamer as a paradigm. In the first part of the book, after an enlightening critical exposition of modern aesthetics, Gadamer maintains that the genuine experience of a work of art is in no way subjective; what we experience is what the work of art has to say to us, i.e. its "truth". What the meaning of "truth" is in this context seems clear at any rate: that the experience of this kind of truth, if it is truth, is not arrived at by a method. And where we do deal with a work of art methodically, in the history of art, this method and its secondary truth must be understood as a means toward the experience of that primary truth.

In the second part of the book Gadamer extends this conclusion to all historical disciplines. He maintains that it was the mistake of nineteenth-century methodology from Schleiermacher to Dilthey to develop the ideal of a purely objective scholarship in which the interpreter is to abstract from the horizons of his own understanding. Against this position Gadamer

introspectively accessible phenomena of consciousness with their intentional objects. For Heidegger the topic was no longer consciousness but man as he understands himself in his historical environment. Understanding cannot be approached introspectively, but only by means of understanding itself, hence by way of interpretation. There is more to it than that, however.

According to Heidegger, to arrive at a true understanding of our understanding, the philosopher has to become aware of an intrinsic esotericism that is contained in all understanding. The task of philosophical hermeneutics is to retrace the escape-route of human understanding and to unearth what is being repressed. The clues are to be found in the understanding itself. But its interpretation now acquires a depth-dimension.

Hermeneutics in Heidegger's sense is thus a sort of philosophical psychoanalysis. And since the esotericism of human understanding has for Heidegger a historical dimension as well, a further aspect of his hermeneutic method is to retrace the philosophical tradition in order to recover the original meanings of its concepts. The later Heidegger this aspect became predominant: to understand our understanding philosophically you have to understand its history. This prepared the stage for Gadamer's quite different conception.

What Gadamer is concerned with is not a problem of philosophical method, but rather hermeneutics in the ordinary sense—the interpretation of texts. The disciplines engaged in such interpretation—the *Geisteswissenschaften*—are to acquire a new understanding of what they are doing. Most emphatically Gadamer does not seek to reach a new method but rather to extricate the historical sciences from what he considers to be their obsession with method. Despite Gadamer's later disclaimer in *Philosophical Hermeneutics* (page 26), the reader of *Truth and Method* comes to understand its title in the sense of "truth versus method".

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claims that what is being interpreted can only be experienced in what it has to say to us if the horizons of our own understanding are reactivated. He goes even to the point of attempting a "rehabilitation of prejudice". All genuine historical understanding, whether of our own or of alien traditions, consists in a "fusion of horizons".

In the third and final part of the book a "universal" significance of this conception of hermeneutics is championed. Here the guiding concept is language, the universal element of understanding. A language constitutes a world, a culture, but it is characteristic of human languages that they are not impermeable. We do not live in a closed horizon. It is of the essence of our understanding that we can understand others—not only other persons but other cultures. Thus the horizons are open for hermeneutic fusion from the beginning. It is in this sense of being a phenomenon of universal scope that hermeneutics acquires with Gadamer a philosophical significance.

The contrast to Heidegger, although hardly noticed by Gadamer himself, is obvious enough. For Heidegger hermeneutics was the method of philosophy, for Gadamer it is a phenomenon of philosophical significance. Furthermore there is a striking contrast in the way in which the historical problem is posed: for Heidegger, the object of hermeneutics is his own understanding, and in order to clarify it you have to trace back its historical presuppositions; for Gadamer, the object of hermeneutics is the history of hermeneutics itself, the history of the problem in order to make this enterprise meaningful it must be connected with our present understanding. Thus for Gadamer the study of history is not a necessary condition for arriving at something else (self-clarification), but is presupposed as a fact, as something going on anyway, whereupon the question is raised of how it can become meaningful.

How is this change of point of view as between Heidegger and Gadamer to be explained? Part of the answer can be seen in the new philosophical climate in Germany between 1930 and 1960 due to Heidegger's influence. The understanding of the entire philosophical tradition since the pre-Socratics was, for Heidegger, a necessary precondition for tackling the philosophical questions themselves. What the master thought of as a means, soon became an end in itself in his school. The impact of this view on the German universities was that philosophy as a going concern disappeared. Instead of doing philosophy one interpreted the great philosophers of the past. The conception of hermeneutics as developed in *Truth and Method* can be understood as a reflex and justification of precisely this situation.

In Gadamer's view the proper way of studying the philosophers of the past is to listen to what they have to say, to expose ourselves to their "truth". In analogy to confrontation with a work of art, Gadamer is something you confront yourself with, not something you question. Gadamer advocates an ideal of receptivity as against a critical, methodical approach. We are not to deal with what we encounter in history with historical methods, by explaining the conditions of its genesis, for then we do not take it

seriously; but we are also not to question its validity, for there are no criteria of validity. The idea of a mere "fusion of horizons" is then all that remains.

By abandoning the clarification of our own present understanding as the point of departure Gadamer thus surrenders even the remainder of methodology that was still left in Heidegger. But Heidegger had prepared the way even for this further development. That Gadamer could oppose "truth" and "method" presupposes Heidegger's notion of truth as "disclosedness" or "unhiddenness". Heidegger's search for a concept of truth wider than the truth of propositions could have been a fruitful enterprise. But if this concept is deprived of its essential contrast to what is false, apparent, etc., it is not being extended but destroyed. For instance, it may be correct that art has something to do with truth, but this can hardly be demonstrated merely by pointing out that a work of art has the function of showing something. And if Gadamer claims that Heidegger has overcome the problem of historical relativism, we have to ask ourselves whether Heidegger is not rather a way of avoiding the problem of overcoming a way of somebody so changes the meaning of the word "true" that the problem can no longer be meaningfully posed.

It is probably no accident that for Gadamer, as for Heidegger, the problem in which the question of historical relativism makes itself felt most poignantly is the problem of social norms—plays a negligible role. It is characteristic for the entire tradition of philosophical romanticism from Schelling and Hegel to Heidegger and Gadamer that in every way and on every level a substituted conception of art became a substitute for the question of the justification of norms, and that it was in every instance an obscuration of the concept of truth which allowed for the transition.

There is a second conception, closely connected to the notion of truth, the answer can be seen in Gadamer's outlook, which also derives from Heidegger. Both philosophers interpret the Enlightenment and the objectivism of modern rationalism as expressions of a trend toward domination and control. This is contrasted with an attitude of receptivity which in Heidegger surrenders itself to Being. In Gadamer to the voices of tradition. Gadamer makes no attempt to justify the appropriateness of the rationalist tradition. Interpretation of the rationalist tradition, more adequate than the opposition between a dominating and a receptive attitude, between activity and passivity, might be the opposite of a universalistic and a particularistic point of view, but then it would seem to be more difficult to denounce the point of view of rationality and method as one-sided.

In the essays of the 1960s and 1970s Gadamer has progressively developed his conception so that it has become more attractive. The book is on the one hand anti-rationalist and still rational, but it is mellowing. And the emphasis is on "the universality of the hermeneutic problem" leads Gadamer to see it more and more as a problem of the interpretation of our own understanding and not just that of others. This becomes particularly evident in his paper on "Semantics and Hermeneutics" (1972), the most recent of the essays included in *Philosophical Hermeneutics*. This paper might serve as a bridge to hermeneutics for the English analytic philosopher. Semantics and hermeneutics, Gadamer here tells us, deal with the same problem of linguistic meaning. For semantics the primary unit of meaning is the sentence; semantics therefore remains on the level of mere understanding. But everything that is being said draws its meaning out of a larger context that is not expressed explicitly. This is the dimension of interpretation of hermeneutics. It is a mistake to think that there can be isolated propositions; a sentence can be understood only if the question is understood to which it is an answer.

In the same paper Gadamer goes one step further. His most forceful critic, Habermas, had castigated him for the attempt at a "rehabilitation of prejudice". In his reply in an earlier essay (1967) Gadamer had rejected this criticism unpersuasively. But here he begins to assimilate it, and thus demonstrates the

fruitfulness of the "fusion of horizons" in philosophy. The criticism of prejudices, the reflection on our own conditions and limitations, is then becomes the supreme task of hermeneutics itself.

In the central essay of his new German collection, "Hermeneutics and the Philosophical Hermeneutic", Gadamer points out that since Nietzsche the concept of interpretation has acquired a depth-dimension: to interpret means to go behind the phenomena of consciousness. He thus rediscovers that concept of hermeneutics with which Heidegger had started out. With regard to Habermas he still insists that hermeneutics must not contain explanatory elements. But he does now admit that it is the unconscious implications of our understanding that are the primary object of hermeneutics.

These are new and encouraging prospects. They remain, of course, mere prospects as long as no method for the criticism of unconscious presuppositions is being contemplated. As long as the inadequacy of Heidegger's concept of truth is not recognized. What such a reformed hermeneutics seems to call for is a new concept of rationality that is both wide and uncompromisingly critical. In this sense hermeneutics represents a challenge to the philosophy of the English-speaking world. It remains to be seen where the growing interest in Continental philosophy will lead. Is it once again, as for instance with neo-Hegelianism, only the expression of an anti-rational reaction? Or may a "fusion of horizons" between analytical philosophy and hermeneutics be in the offing? The right path for modern philosophy between romanticism and positivism is yet to be found.

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In Quintum Novembris

Summer has come to this:
a gambler's funeral.
Though you walk on wet gold
it is only that the trees have thrown in their hand,
the wind will sweep the board.
The spendthrift god lies cold.

His children have begged for pennies:
sulphur, saltpetre, charred wood
scant the approaching dark.
The sun toils in the mines of Scorpio.
Rockets assail an empty sky
and, flickering, fall back.

Grevel Lindop

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CAP
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DEPARTMENT

ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

The salary for this post will be within the Librarians' Scale, AP 3-8, plus supplements and London weighting. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library and will be expected to undertake a wide range of library duties.

COUNTY OF SHROPSHIRE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
SHROPSHIRE TECHNICAL
COLLEGE

LIBRARIAN

Applications are invited for the post of Librarian Assistant. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library and will be expected to undertake a wide range of library duties.

SHETLAND ISLANDS
COUNCIL

SHETLAND LIBRARY

SCHOOL LIBRARIAN

POST NO. 14151

Applications are invited for the post of School Librarian. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library and will be expected to undertake a wide range of library duties.

LONDON BOROUGH OF
TOWER HAMLETSDIRECTORATE OF
COMMUNITY SERVICES

LIBRARIAN

SENIOR ASSISTANT

£3,282 to £4,095 p.a.

Applications are invited for the post of Senior Assistant Librarian. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library and will be expected to undertake a wide range of library duties.

WILTSHIRE LIBRARY AND
MUSEUM SERVICE

SERVICE LIBRARIAN

SERVICES TO EDUCATION AND
YOUTH PEOPLE

SWINDON DIVISIONAL LIBRARY

LIBRARIAN

£3,282 to £4,095 p.a.

Applications are invited for the post of Librarian Assistant. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library and will be expected to undertake a wide range of library duties.

ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOC-

BEACONSFIELD COLLEGE

LIBRARIAN

£3,282 to £4,095 p.a.

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SHROPSHIRE COUNTY
LIBRARY

SENIOR ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

THE BRITISH COUNCIL
invites applications for the
following posts

LIBRARIAN (IRAN)

Abadan Institute of Technology. Overall supervision of the library including ordering of books and materials, classification, financial checking and training of personnel. Candidates must be Chartered Librarians with a degree, preferably in Science/Technology, and at least 3 years' experience in tertiary institutions. Experience in a Science Faculty would be an advantage. Preferred age range 30-50. Salary: £7,200-£9,000 p.a. approx.

Benefits: Return passages for family, accommodation and schooling provided at nominal charge, furniture and baggage allowances, free medical services. 2 year contract. 78 HO 118

SENIOR LIBRARIAN (IRAN)

Raza Shah Kabir University, Babolsar. To establish services and stock of new Natural Sciences Library. Instruct students in library use and plan library development. Candidates, preferably 27-40 years, with degree and Dip.Lib. ML8 or equivalent and at least 5 years' experience in a university library. Salary: £2,769-£4,014 p.a. approx.

Benefits: Return air fares for family, free campus accommodation, 2 year contract, renewable. 78 HU 75

Return fares are paid. Local contracts are guaranteed by the British Council. Please write briefly stating qualifications and length of appropriate experience, quoting relevant reference number and title of post, for further details and application form to The British Council (Appointments), 65 Davies Street, London, W1V 2AA.

PUBLIC & UNIVERSITY

ESTABLISHED COMPANY

Applications are invited for the post of Librarian Assistant. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library and will be expected to undertake a wide range of library duties.

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

PART-TIME COURSE

LIBRARIAN

£3,282 to £4,095 p.a.

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